Seeing that special events measure up

By Mary McCabe English

Three months before the 1984 Summer Olympics started in Los Angeles, researchers at Needham Harper Worldwide began a series of surveys designed to gauge attitude and awareness regarding the Olympics and corporate sponsorship of the games.

With negotiations for the 1988 Summer Olympics already under way, Needham is ready to provide farsighted marketers with an analysis of just what Olympic sponsorship can mean to their bottom line.

The Needham surveys continued throughout the Olympics and into the last week of September. Various aspects of the results have been released to interested parties, and Jim Crimmins, director-marketing decision systems at the Chicago-based company, says a formal presentation of all the information gathered during the five months will take place by the end of November.

Mary McCabe English frequently writes on marketing technology and measuring for Special Report.

Most folks agree that the use of special events as a sales promotion tool is growing by leaps and bounds. A pity, many add, that the incidence of solid events research—such as the Needham Olympics survey—isn't keeping stride.

"There's no doubt that people are measuring more today than before, but that's easy because they weren't measuring them at all before," says Bill Robinson, president of William A. Robinson Inc., a Chicago marketing company.

Mr. Robinson says there are a number of reasons behind the growth that does exist, chief among them the demand for more accountability in-house as more money is pumped into events and the emergence of a more competitive attitude as more companies get into the sponsorship act.

"There's definitely more measurement, mainly because more money is going into it, and companies are loathe to spend money on things they can't measure," says Don Dixon, managing director-promotional group, Howard Marlboro Group in New York.

"I think the major trend in using special events as a marketing tool probably doubled."

Lesa Ukman, executive editor of "Special Events Report" newsletter in Chicago, also attributes some of the growth in measurement to a change in the perception of special events' function.

"I think in the past special events were looked at as good pr, and that's about as far as it went," Ms. Ukman says. "Money for special events used to come out of pr budgets, which aren't nearly as big as advertising or marketing budgets. But then about eight years ago, companies began to see sponsorship as a good marketing tool rather than just good pr. I think all of this contributed to a more serious approach to special events, including more interest in measurement."

Although no one was willing to discount the effect more sophisticated technology will have on all research areas, most of those

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measurement started back in 1981-82 when the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee started selling their sponsorships and they were in the multiple millions of dollars. But the trend goes back even a little further, because between 1980 and 1984 the number of companies

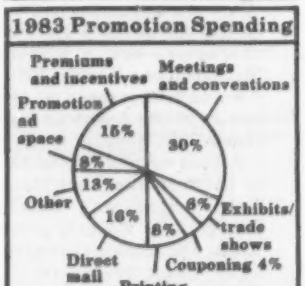
The tale of the tape

Split of advertising vs. promotion budgets

Year	Advertising	Promotion
1976	42.1%	57.9%
1979	40.6%	59.4%
1980	39.5%	60.5%
1981	38.1%	61.9%
1982	38.0%	62.0%
1983	38.0%	62.0%

Source: Russell D. Bowman, vp, John Blair Marketing, New York. First appeared in Marketing Communications.

1983 Promotion Spending



Source: Russell D. Bowman, vp, John Blair Marketing, New York. First appeared in Marketing Communications.

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When "Eveready" wanted to boost sales, they came to us. And we helped them move 8 weeks worth of batteries through to retail in 3 weeks. Just like we helped Hills Bros. Coffee. With a coupon promotion that boosted sales by 30,000 cans in one market alone. And Dunkin' Donuts. With a joint promotion that produced a 7.3% improvement in incremental sales.

We're the National Bowling Council. And we can help you pin down the 69,000,000 Americans who are active bowlers. It's a highly organized market. Which means you can count on our follow through. It's also a market with a median household income of $24,388. A mean household size of 3.6 people. And a homeownership rate of 79%.

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For a free promotion ideas kit, including an in-depth demographic study, call Lance Elliott. (202) 659-9070.

NBC National Bowling Council

Bowlers: The Great American Market.
1919 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.,
Washington, D.C. 20006

Measure

(Continued from Page 20)
questioned believe that traditional measurement tools are more than adequate for measuring special events.

Those tools are statistical research for base information, focus groups, panels, door-to-door or phone surveys to determine appeal level and, sometimes, a small-scale test event if pretesting is feasible.

According to Mr. Robinson, this process first should determine the appropriateness of a special event against the total marketing picture for the brand or product in question.

For example, Barbara Doljack, marketing director for *Seventeen*, says various interests had been trying to persuade the magazine to sponsor a tennis tournament for years, but nothing proposed suited the *Seventeen* image.

"Then, the people from the Maureen Connolly Brinker Foundation came to us and suggested a tournament for amateur young women, and it seemed like a natural for our audience," Ms. Doljack says.

That was 10 years ago, and *Seventeen's* instincts, bolstered by the research data the magazine accumulates with continual reader surveys, proved sound.

According to Ms. Doljack, every one of *Seventeen's* special events and promos—including its annual Tennis Tournament of Champions, Swim Meet of Champions, Now You're Cooking National Menu Planning Competition (co-sponsored with General Foods), National Concerto Competition (co-sponsored with General Motors) and new cover girl competition—is designed "to have a positive impact on our audience and reinforce the wholesome and tasteful image of *Seventeen*."

Having clear goals is vital for accurate special events measurement, Mr. Robinson says.

What is the event supposed to accomplish—image enhancement or change, awareness, trial, an increase in shelf space? Is a special event the best way to accomplish this goal? Does it target its audience well? Is it cost-efficient? What about timing—would a special event at a different time be better?

Assuming that this homework has been done, Ms. Ukman cautions against being too hasty in judging an event a failure.

"I think this is a mistake a lot of companies make," Ms. Ukman says. "I believe it takes at least three years for an event to really pay off. If you look at the classic success stories—Coors, for example, which started its bike race sponsorship about 10 years ago, began small, but now the same race is scheduled to have major network coverage next year—you have to commit for at least three years."

Crucial to all this is budgeting for measurement, a step where many marketers fall short. All the more pity, critics say, when the shortage is weighed against the potentially lucrative impact a well-planned special event can have on a company's bottom line because of nearly perfect targeting ability.

Blue Bell Inc.'s Wrangler, for example, makes no secret of the return it has realized from special events.

Considered one of the most progressive companies when it comes to special events measurement, Wrangler realized some $3.5 million from major events sponsored in 1983.

"To me, special events are very much an advertising effort, and if you're not forcing the fan back to retail, I don't know why you do it."

—David Allen Wrangler

According to David Allen, director-special events for Wrangler Brand Marketing Division of Blue Bell in Greensboro, N.C., this return stemmed from the company's consistent use of a measurement formula based on market research surveys of buying habits taken before, during and after an event and set up to pinpoint incremental sales generated by each event.

Wrangler's integration of its special events, marketing and advertising functions under the same organizational umbrella is also a definite plus.

"Everything we do here has to be tied to moving product," Mr. Allen says. "To me, special events are very much an advertising effort, and if you're not forcing the fan back to retail, I don't know why you do it."

The Wrangler director says he believes it is foolish to assume any sponsorship without measuring.

"The return can be two or three times what you spend [on a special event] if you do it right," he says. "I think the key, though, is to measure against what your over-all goal is—am I actually creating a propensity to purchase my product, and am I in the right area to move my product or am I trying to move my product in the wrong demographic.

"Let your national advertising focus on image . . . special events are too targeted not to be used for promoting sales."

Nonetheless, Mr. Allen concedes that it is easy for a company to get caught up in the excitement of a special event and overlook the measurable return the right event can and should produce.

"I think one of the biggest problems is that a company will get caught up in the drama of the particular event—get too far into it to see out of it," he says. "In our case, we're not in the

(Continued on Page 24)

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Measure

(Continued from Page 22)

racing business or the sports business. We're in the apparel business, and that has to be kept firmly in mind."

Al Guerrara, manager-special events and community relations for Milwaukee-based Pabst Brewing Co., says he also believes focusing on end results is the best way to initiate a special event sponsorship.

"Basically, you have to look at the program and see some value," Mr. Guerrara says. "Depending on your goals, this may not be dollar for dollar return—it could be exposure, it could be image enhancement, it could be positive pr—although, generally, with beer, a foremost consideration is, will it sell more beer.

"The point is, when you're talking about the kind of money this takes, you have to justify it. You have to figure out just what it is you want out of the event and not go in cold and hope that something good turns up."

Mr. Dixon of Marlboro agrees with Mr. Allen that sales growth should be part of the picture.

"Part of the problem in selling special events is that whether you want it to be or not, it's an emotional buy, let's sponsor the U.S. Track and Field team because it feels good," says Mr. Dixon, who was formerly director-sports programing at Anheuser-Busch, St. Louis.

"I think a lot of this comes from the fact that sponsorship is still seen more as an image and awareness builder than a way to build sales, unless you have a marketer that coordinates special events with its advertising, pr and other marketing functions. Wrangler, Anheuser-Busch and R.J. Reynolds, for example, do a superb job of this.

"I'm not saying special events shouldn't be used to build image and awareness, but I think a much greater emphasis should be made on taking special events right back to point of sale, right back to the store. There's not enough of this."

Other observers say creating advertising and other promotion tie-ins not only strengthens a special event, it expands a marketer's opportunities for securing measurable data about the event's effectiveness.

J.C. Penney Co. put a great deal of effort (not to mention a reported $10 million) into staging its just-concluded Salute To Italy promo as part of a total marketing-ad campaign that included heavy print and broadcast advertising as well as company sponsorship of the Public Broadcasting Service's September telecast of Puccini operas "Turandot" and "Tosca."

Retail merchandisers see foreign promotion events as a vehicle for building traffic and sales, attracting new shoppers and enhancing image, and Penney's conducted extensive on-site exit interviews with customers in addition to telephone interviews of the general market to determine whether these goals were met.

"We were also Burke-ing [telephone interviews done by Burke Marketing Research the day after tv ads appear to measure recall] at the same time," says Ira Ostroff, manager of apparel research for the New York-based retailer.

"We normally put a lot of weight behind research, but this one was very special because of the heavy investment both from an advertising and promotion standpoint. We don't measure every event we put on to this extent, otherwise we'd be spending more on research than merchandising. Our involvement [in research] depends on the impact the event is expected to have on the company," Mr. Ostroff says.

"You have to figure out just what it is you want out of the event and not go in cold and hope that something good turns up."

—Al Guerrara
Pabst Brewing Co.

Mr. Ostroff, like Messrs. Allen and Dixon, expects sales to play a major role in that impact.

"I think sales almost always have to be part of the equation," the Penney's manager says. "We could improve image forever, but without the sales we'd be out of business pretty quickly. I think that dual purpose is necessary in any event."

Special events measurement undoubtedly will change.

"I think it's still an infant kind of activity, so I believe we're going to see more special events, with more industries using them that have never used them before . . . for example, computer people, computer software, data delivery, telecommunications," Mr. Robinson says. "As these emerging industries achieve advertising parity with one another, I think they'll begin asking themselves what else they can do—as the beer people did—to set their products apart, and they'll be looking hard at other means of communication."

Mr. Robinson also sees marketers making greater use of special events' targeting ability to achieve specific goals.

"As we see new industries using special events, we may well see them using new kinds of special events that are more segmented," he says. "We're already seeing segmentation with events that are black oriented, Hispanic oriented . . . . Special events are a good way to talk to these groups because they're so targeted.

"I'm sure there'll be other changes, too. In general, as these new companies use them [special events] more, I think we'll see more flexibility and less predictability in the way special events are used."

miller displays

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your big splash might just ripple away.

You've got your big promotion ship-shape.
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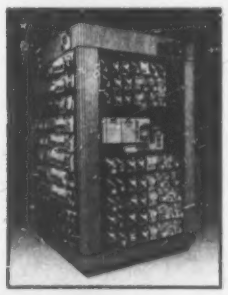

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$1.25 a copy; $52 a year

Monday, October 29, 1984

Advertising Age

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Gillette goes all out for split-30s

By VERNE GAY

Gillette Co., Boston, intends to have 15-second commercials for most of its nationally advertised brands over the next year, becoming the first major advertiser to integrate the split-30 into its entire tv buying strategy.

The ads, expected to be condensed versions of 30-second ads now on the network schedules, will support "beds" of 30-second units. Each will incorporate the core selling message of the 30-second unit.

The speed with which Gillette undertakes the project depends on the success of split-30s Gillette is running on network tv, according to Hans Lopater, vp-market research at Gillette's personal care division. These include ads for Foamy shaving cream, Bare Elegance and Toni Silkwave and Lightwave home permanents, he said.

Creative Review Board tackles the split-30 issue. See Page 3.

"It is likely that the majority of Gillette's brands [will be supported by 15-second versions]," said Mr. Lopater. He noted 22 major brands will be affected. They include Atra, Trac II, Good News! and Daisy from the safety-razor division; Paper Mate, and selected personal care products.

Like other package-goods advertisers, Gillette is exploring the feasibility of the 15-second unit as a way to build reach and frequency for heavily advertised brands.

The unit also is being used as a way to build exposure for small-budgeted brands. "Nobody wants to go to 15s, but the economics are such that for the $2 million-to-$5 million advertised brands it is the only way they can be on tv," said Thomas Ryan, vp-advertising services, Gillette North America.

Brands with similar target audiences will be paired within the split-30, according to Mr. Lopater. For example, Toni and Bare Elegance would be incorporated into a split-30; Foamy and other male-oriented products will be slotted on a split-30.

Part of the creative strategy is to incorporate the "core selling message" of each 30-second commercial into the 15. After the 30 is created, the message then will be edited to a 15 which will reflect the message of the larger unit. No special 15-second units will be created, Mr. Lopater said.

Other major advertisers using split-30s include Beecham Products, Pittsburgh, for Calgon products, Aqua Velva and Aqua-Fresh; Warner-Lambert Co., Morris Plains, N.J., for Efferdent and Rolaids, and Alberto-Culver Co., Melrose Park, Ill., for selected Alberto VO5 products.#

Distillers inching toward cable tv

By GAY JERVEY and STEVEN W. COLFORD

Distilled-spirits marketers, intensely cautious over the very mention of liquor advertising on tv, soon may be enticed to cable tv as an ad medium.

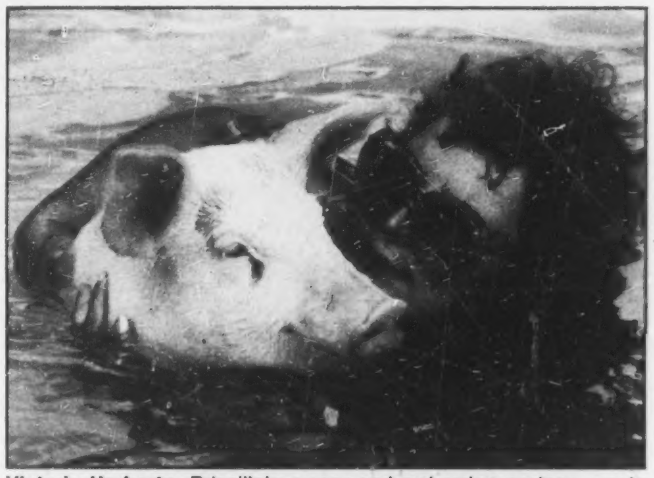
At the same time, a small but growing number of distilled-spirits companies are experimenting with the use of in-flight video advertising solely on international routes, in some instances with an eye to domestic use—which also could incite public antagonism.

From the standpoint of cable—in addition to USA Cable—a likely candidate for liquor advertising is Entertainment & Sports Programming Network, which along with USA, said it would judge any proposed ads case by case.

But if history is to repeat itself, the activist Center for Science in the Public Interest could expand its anti-alcohol advertising campaign from tv and radio to cable. Only last week the CSPI asked Ted Turner not to solicit liquor ads for either WTBS or Cable News Network, and a Turner Broadcasting spokesman said the company decided not to.

"We felt there were still some legal questions [unanswered] and that the climate was just not right for it," said Art Santos, vp-public

(Continued on Page 88)



Victoria Herberta, Priscilla's owner and swimming partner, wants Pepsi-Cola to commemorate the pig on a soft-drink can.

This little piggy cries for Pepsi

By SARAH STIANSEN

DALLAS—Pepsi-Cola has Michael Jackson and now its Mountain Dew soft drink is gaining new friends because of a local hero named Priscilla.

Priscilla is a 6-month-old piglet that swims. She sty-rocketed to celebrity status last summer after rescuing a drowning boy from a Houston lake.

An ardent Mountain Dew drinker, Priscilla even drinks it while performing on the banquet circuit. Drinking Mountain Dew, in fact, is part of this pig's repertoire.

And if plans go as her trainers hope, Priscilla's fame will continue to spread. She is booked for West German tv in December, and Johnny Carson is interested in booking her for NBC's "Tonight Show," according to Chere Hickock, owner of Animal Trackers, an animal talent agency here that is working with Priscilla.

But on the subject of pig promotions, the response from PepsiCo—which gained wide exposure and incidental publicity for its Pepsi brand's association with Michael Jackson and Jackson family tour—is decidedly tempered.

As animal actors go, pigs are relatively uncommon. One star was Arnold Ziffel, a pig who gained a sort of cult following his perfor-

(Continued on Page 86)

NEWSPAPER

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Magazine notes

Last week's American Magazine Conference in the Bahamas inspired talks about acquisitions, t-shirts and other matters. *(See stories on Page 3.)*

Brew blitz at Miller taking premium turn

By SCOTT HUME

Considering the beer industry's current pace of new-product introductions and business diversification, one could easily forget that the industry suffers from stagnant sales growth.

Miller Brewing last week stepped up that pace with the introduction into five test markets of Plank Road Original Draught, a new premium beer.

The industry's fast pace of new-product development isn't even limited to the beer market. Coors' food-products unit is test-marketing a candy bar that uses a no-caffeine chocolate substitute derived from brewer's yeast. Anheuser-Busch is expanding distribution of its wines and, like G. Heileman Brewing, increasing the scope of its snack-foods business.

Miller Brewing, however, continues to concentrate on beers. Plank Road is the fourth new beer it has introduced in the last 18 months, but the first brand introduced in the premium-price category, where it will have to fight for market share not only with Anheuser-Busch's Budweiser, but with Miller High Life, Milwaukee-based Miller's own faltering flagship brand.

Some industry observers viewed the Plank Road test as Miller's attempt to offer a differently posi-

(Continued on Page 90)

Last Minute News

Apparel group seeks to assign $10 million effort

NEW YORK—Crafted With Pride Council, a group of apparel and textile companies, is searching for an agency to handle an estimated $10 million made-in-America campaign. The effort involves advertising and public relations.

New time slot prescribed for 'E/R'

NEW YORK—CBS-TV will move "E/R" from 8:30 p.m. (ET) Tuesday to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, as of Nov. 7, bumping "Dreams," which will return to the air later. The network has time to decide its 8 p.m.-to-9 p.m. Tuesday replacements for "E/R" and "AfterMASH," given preemptions on Nov. 6 for election coverage and Nov. 13 for "Donald Duck's 50th Birthday" (*see related story on Page 88*).

K&E acquires direct-marketing ad agency

BOSTON—Kenyon & Eckhardt has reached an agreement to acquire Cinamon Associates, a Brookline, Mass., direct-marketing ad agency. The $3 million agency is K&E's first entry into direct marketing.

Needham wins Carter-Wallace business

NEW YORK—Carter-Wallace has assigned its Answer Pregnancy Test Kit, Pearl Drops Tooth Polish and Pearl Drops Smoker's Toothpaste to

(Continued on Page 8)

Cigarets face sports storm

By VALERIE MACKIE

Antismoking groups around the world are pressuring cigaret marketers to stop sponsoring sporting and cultural events and cease promoting cigarets during telecasts of these events with tv-oriented "reminder" boards that adorn stadiums and other sports arenas.

In Australia, telecasts of sporting events sponsored by cigaret marketers were found to have violated the tv ban on cigaret advertising. Similar moves to stop cigaret marketers from sponsoring these events are under way in the U.K. and Canada, and the U.S. is about to get hit as well.

The American Cancer Society, New York, is about to write a letter to the Federal Communications Commission, the tv networks and owners of the football teams saying the telecast of a cigaret outdoor board is a violation of the spirit of the 1971 tv advertising ban, according to ACS spokesman Irving Rimer, vp-public information.

The ACS is "very concerned about the indirect advertising of cigarets on tv" and "particularly concerned about football games where tv cameras focus on billboards of cigaret advertisers," Mr. Rimer said.

As an example, he cited the Marlboro cowboy outdoor board located behind the goalposts in the San Francisco 49ers stadium, Candlestick Park.

"The American Cancer Society is seeking voluntary action from people who can control it. . .whether it be the people who place ads or control sports stadiums or tv cameras," said Matthew Myers,

(Continued on Page 88)

Coke bubbles over overseas prospects

By NANCY GIGES and LISA PHILLIPS

New York—Coca-Cola Co. is targeting the expansion of per-capita soft-drink consumption internationally as a key growth opportunity.

Company management told financial analysts here that increasing per-capita soft-drink consumption outside the U.S. is so important that company managers from around the world will gather at a weeklong meeting next month devoted solely to the subject.

"Given our already high share of market, simply expanding market share is not the answer, and expanding geographically is the answer in certain underdeveloped areas, but it is not a major opportunity on a worldwide basis," Coca-Cola president Donald Keough said.

Secondarily, Coca-Cola is actively looking for ways to use its frozen-foods marketing expertise and leverage its extensive but underused frozen-food distribution system.

Focusing on the exceptional performance of the Columbia Pictures subsidiary, the company brought its top management here to outline plans and tell how the company intends to exceed its 6% historical soft-drink growth rate outside the U.S.

Other plans include:

- Aggressive promotion of Diet Coke and Sprite internationally.
- Use of debt to finance high-return investments, with the frozen specialty foods area an acquisition target.
- Possible delay of the rollout of Minute Maid orange soda in the U.S. because so many Coke bottlers already market Sunkist (soon to be acquired by R.J. Reynolds Industries).
- Reduced rate of increase for spending domestically in 1985 for marketing soft drinks.

"The real answer. . .is getting more people to drink more of our product in more places and on more occasions," Mr. Keough said.

He noted that consumption of Coca-Cola soft drinks overseas is 49 6.5-oz. drinks per person, per year, compared with 272 in the U.S. Mr. Keough said the company's efforts will focus on greater product availability and product variety. That's where emphasis on Sprite lemon/lime and on Diet Coke comes into play.

He pointed out that outside the U.S. per-capita consumption of Sprite is four drinks a year, compared with 27 in this country. "In the past, Sprite has been viewed by some as a kind of filler to engage some of the bottler's excess production capacity. That view has changed," he said. "We are increasing our efforts behind Sprite to the point that marketing spend-

(Continued on Page 86)

Highlights

The ad industry last week unveiled its version of what advertising may be like in the year 2000. *See Page 10.*

Warner Amex Cable Communications, determined to trim losses that hit $99 million in 1983, is expected to intensify its search for investment partners for franchises in Milwaukee and New York. *See Page 12.*

Ad agencies are moving people into international creative positions that reveal just how multinational advertising is being done, and how it is affecting staff time and careers. *See Page 24.*

Insight is a more reliable guide to creating effective advertising than is research, says a high-powered panel of experts at the Conference Board's 1984 marketing conference. *See Page 38.* However, a top creative executive, who in the past has belittled research, told an American Assn. of Advertising Agencies meeting that research often protects agencies from the bad judgment of advertisers. *See Page 73.*

Fortune is getting a real "bang for its buck" out of a campaign promoting the same message to consumers and the advertising trade. *See Page 40.*

Computer literacy will be the key to the marketplace of tomorrow. Use of the computer will change markets and consumers. *See Page 46.*

Frito-Lay has changed one of its namesake products and repositioned another in its effort to keep up with consumer tastes. *See Page 58.*

As technology has improved, the number of consumer product companies using toll-free telephone numbers to answer consumer questions and concerns has increased. *See Page 71.*

Alan Alda remains the "favorite" tv personality in the over-all 1984 Performer Q study by Marketing Evaluations. *See Page 72.*

fortune, musks are in vogue once again. *See Page 4.*

FORUM

Advertising is a business in which some of its best practitioners are better at creating than managing their affairs. Adman Saul Fruchthendler talks about the indelicate topic of money. *See Page 18.*

What will be the next "major mania?" Katherine Kertz Stanton offers a hint—it'll crack you up. *See Page 18.*

INTERNATIONAL

Black & Decker Mfg. Co. plans to market power tools and household appliances globally within a year, a strategy that has never been tried in this category by a U.S. company, according to industry sources. *See Page 52.*

Kerry Packer, Australia's leading media magnate with a fortune of more than $200 million, is embroiled in the biggest and most bizarre political controversy of the year Down Under. *See Page 52.*

The Jornal de Cidade, a twice-monthly publication in Alta Floresta, in the wilds of Brazil's Mato Grosso state, is not like the *New York Times* but it carries almost as much journalist weight in this town. *See Page 54.*

COMING THURSDAY

SPECIAL REPORT

U.S. research companies have been expanding internationally for years, and now British and European researchers are turning the tables—they're invading the U.S.

CORPORATE CLOSEUP

To Beecham Cosmetics' good

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General Foods drops options on daytime ads

By VERNE GAY

New York—General Foods will not exercise options it holds for about $5 million in network daytime ads during the first quarter of 1985, a move that partly reflects poor sales performances by several brands.

The decision last week not to exercise its options on time reserved last spring during the upfront daytime market will result in GF's first-quarter '85 daytime budget being cut in half, according to network tv sources. Still, GF is expected to spend as much as $70 million in daytime during 1985, its biggest daytime budget since 1981. It is the first time since 1983 GF has canceled network daytime options (AA, Dec. 6, '82).

Network sources said GF was the only major daytime spender to forego its options. However, the sources reported at least four major daytime advertisers, including Lever Bros., tried to shift first-quarter '85 spending to the second quarter. The networks refused those requests, sources said, because the networks believe daytime, which was the first daypart to sell out in the upfront market, will garner much higher prices on the scatter market. In addition, calendar-year second quarters traditionally are higher-priced than first quarters, thus the tradeoff would have left the networks with greater available scatter inventories in a lower-priced quarter.

The spending cutbacks at GF

(Continued on Page 86)

Two form new company

Landau execs split

By ROBERT RAISSMAN

New York—The two executives responsible for turning Robert Landau Associates into one of the top three sports marketing companies in the world—before it filed for bankruptcy in September—have resigned from RLA to start their own company.

Michael Trager, senior vp at RLA and president of its international division, and Michael Leites, RLA's vp-sports marketing, left the company last week to form Sports Marketing & Television International in Greenwich, Conn.

Their departure leaves RLA virtually without a sports marketing division. Other employes of the division already have been released. In fact, RLA in total has pared down to 12 employes from a high of 250.

The resignations of Messrs. Trager and Leites were not the only bad news for RLA last week. It is already at the center of a $5 million fraud suit filed by Atlanta-based Dittler Bros. against ABC Inc. over a $1.5 million loan to RLA (AA, Oct. 22). In addition, RLA was forced last week to file suit against a small New York production company to prevent the release of embarrassing outtakes from a film on the Ford Big Foot.

Two Plus Two Productions allegedly had threatened to release or "re-edit" footage of the Big Foot, a modified Ford truck with 6-ft.-

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